Chapter Six

Stewardship or Service

**This part of our study has to deal with our spiritual service of worship. This phrase is taken from Romans 12:1. We will spend some time later in this section concerning this verse. Our lives as Christians involve several things.**

**God has done so much for us, we must naturally expect that we must do something for Him. Many people have the false impression that once you have experienced the grace of God that you are in need of nothing else. The truth is, our salvation puts us into a relationship with God, and in order to keep that relationship, we must fulfill certain responsibilities. These responsibilities are what we call the spiritual service. We will find in our study that we have a purpose. We will find that we are the hands to do God's will. We are the feet to take the Gospel to the lost. We are the conscience of those around us. We are to perform the works necessary to bring about salvation in souls.**

**Times have changed from the first century. A brief look will expose the great advantages we have over those individuals. We will also see that they had some advantages over us. Primarily their greatest advantage was by having the leadership of the Apostles and divinely inspired men. The Holy Spirit worked quite frequently through many people and avenues to promote the Gospel and build up the Church. We will notice that the early church was in its infancy stage, and the Holy Spirit was helping it to grow.**

**The Church had to grow in much the same way that individuals grow today. By starting with a solid foundation and building upon the guidance and leadership of spiritual men.**

**We also have to learn that there were rules of conduct that applied to early Christians just as there are rules that apply to us today. Those people had to act upon the authority of Christ. Just as we have rules of applying proper authority, they had the same.**

**As we get into our study, remember that these actions had a purpose. Once again, we come back to the fact that there is a purpose. God has a plan and all of these elements helped to accomplish that plan. The early church had a beginning in Jerusalem and from there, the Gospel was spread to the rest of the world. It is not enough that the Gospel be spread around the world, but that there be souls who obey it. When souls obey the Gospel, they are placed in the Church. Being in the Church meant certain responsibilities were placed upon the individual members. At first, the responsibilities were given as the Holy Spirit saw the need. That is why Paul had to discuss the use of spiritual gifts and the people’s proper attitude toward them in 1 Corinthians 12-14.**

**The use of spiritual gifts**

1 Corinthians 12:1-10 (NKJV) Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: {2} You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. {3} Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. {4} There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. {5} There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. {6} And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. {7} But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: {8} for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, {9} to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, {10} to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

**Notice in verse seven above that these gifts were distributed to individuals for the profit of all. Rarely, if ever, do we see where a single individual is profited by spiritual gifts. Try to think of all the times that Jesus performed miracles in private. How many miracles were kept secret? The use of miraculous gifts had a purpose. In the case of the Corinthians, it was to build up all of the Christians at that location. Miracles were used throughout biblical history to prove that the actions were from God or approved by God. Miracles were shown to confirm that the people who were speaking, were speaking for God. A person was never benefited by miracles that others did not take note of.**

Romans 12:3-8 (NKJV) For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. {4} For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, {5} so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. {6} Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; {7} or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; {8} he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.

**Once again, notice in verse six that these gifts were given to them. If these gifts were given, they were given to be used by those who received them. Those people did not or could not suppress the works of the spirit**.

1 Corinthians 12:28-31 (NKJV) And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. {29} Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? {30} Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? {31} But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

**Like I said earlier, these were placed in the Church for the growth and development of all Christians. Even they were told that there would be differences when the church would have developed to its maturity.**

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NKJV) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,

**Notice also, in verse twelve, the purpose of these gifts is given. In simple language, the saints were given the tools necessary to do God's work. We might be handed a bible and told that this is our rulebook. We might have study aids to allow us to better understand the meaning of scriptures. We also have many tools available to us. Sometimes these tools are our own abilities and our own desire to please God and do His will.**

Hebrews 2:4 (NKJV) God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

**This says that the Holy Spirit gives according to His own will. Like we said earlier, the Holy Spirit was giving what was needed when it was needed. A person who is very capable of doing something does not need to be taught how to do that thing. Once they reached a certain level, the responsibilities that were given to them increased. We should always be working hard to reach a higher level of responsibility in God's kingdom.**

1 Peter 4:10-11 (NKJV) As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. {11} If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

**"that in all things God may be glorified...". This is the very reason for our existence in the Body of Christ. This is the reason we obey God. This is the reason we keep His commandments, His way. Our very purpose in life has to be and must be to bring glory to God. We do this when we obey Him. We do this when we cause others to obey God. Jesus talked about our light in Matthew 5:16 as being the guide to show others how to glorify God. God deserves this glory. We must do all that we can to see that He receives it.**

1 Corinthians 12:11 (NKJV) But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

**There are just a few places in the New Testament that describes the use of spiritual gifts. A person who studies well and learns the New Testament in a chronological order will notice a trend. For the books that were written in the earlier days of the church, we find the need and the use of these miraculous gifts. As time goes by, we see that the books written later make less reference to these gifts and even speak of them in the past tense. Paul said that they would cease, "when that which is perfect comes" (1 Cor 13:10).**

**Serve One Another**

**The following verses will use the phrase "one another". Notice these uses. Read them in their context. This study will give us a sense of responsibility that we have to our brethren. Our obligation is not only to God, but also to His children.**

Galatians 5:13 (NKJV) For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

**We have an obligation to our brethren. This is because we cannot be children of God alone. Christians make up the body of Christ. Paul used the example of the physical body when he describes the spiritual body. This is why we have the need to help each other.**

Romans 12:4 (NKJV) For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function,

1 Corinthians 12:12-31 (NKJV) For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. {13} For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. {14} For in fact the body is not one member but many. {15} If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? {16} And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? {17} If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? {18} But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. {19} And if they were all one member, where would the body be? {20} But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. {21} And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." {22} No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. {23} And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, {24} but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, {25} that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. {26} And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. {27} Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.

**Now that we see the importance of being part of the body, we understand our part that we participate in. Now, let us look at this phrase; "one another"**

Romans 12:10 (NKJV) Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

Romans 12:16 (NKJV) Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

Romans 13:8 (NKJV) Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Romans 14:13 (NKJV) Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Romans 15:5 (NKJV) Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

Romans 15:7 (NKJV) Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

Romans 15:14 (NKJV) Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

1 Corinthians 11:33 (NKJV) Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

1 Corinthians 12:25 (NKJV) that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

Galatians 5:13 (NKJV) For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:26 (NKJV) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Ephesians 4:2 (NKJV) with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

Ephesians 4:25 (NKJV) Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

Ephesians 4:32 (NKJV) And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 5:19 (NKJV) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

Ephesians 5:21 (NKJV) submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Colossians 3:9 (NKJV) Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

Colossians 3:13 (NKJV) bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Colossians 3:16 (NKJV) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 (NKJV) And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

1 Thessalonians 4:9 (NKJV) But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

1 Thessalonians 4:18 (NKJV) Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NKJV) Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Hebrews 3:13 (NKJV) but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:24 (NKJV) And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

Hebrews 10:25 (NKJV) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

James 5:9 (NKJV) Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

James 5:16 (NKJV) Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

1 Peter 1:22 (NKJV) Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

1 Peter 3:8 (NKJV) Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

1 Peter 4:8 (NKJV) And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

1 Peter 4:9 (NKJV) Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV) As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 5:5 (NKJV) Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

1 John 1:7 (NKJV) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 3:11 (NKJV) For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another,

1 John 3:23 (NKJV) And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

1 John 4:7 (NKJV) Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:11 (NKJV) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

1 John 4:12 (NKJV) No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.

**Now, I want you to go back and underline in these verses above, the phrase "one another". Next, on a separate piece of paper, list all of the things we are to do to each other. Then list the results of these actions. Then we can list the benefits of these actions. Not every verse has a result or benefit listed. Now, in your mind, put all of these together. This will help you understand why your brother is so important. It will help you understand that you are as important as any brother or sister in Christ. You will see that you have a duty and responsibility to build up your brethren. You have a duty to participate in the Church. You have a duty to God, along with others.**

**Let me illustrate it this way. Life can be hard when we try to go it alone. Have you ever had to push a car for any reason? Maybe you ran out of gas and were trying to push it down to the corner gas station. This was very hard to do, depending on the terrain, it could be impossible for one individual to handle it. But let’s suppose that someone had compassion for you and helped you push the car. You realize that you are still pushing with all of your might, but it is also a little easier. You do not want this helper to do it alone, so you work together. All of a sudden three more people pitch in to help and suddenly this burden is now a cakewalk. You think that you could even push the car with one hand or with a couple of fingers. When others are helping you, more is accomplished. You eventually would have gotten you car to the station, but with a lot of effort. You show your appreciation to these people and are thankful that they were kind-hearted enough to help. If others are willing to do that for you, you must be willing to do that for others. We do not always know our value to others. Christians must help each other.**

**Giving**

**It has been said that one does not truly believe, unless they forsake all. They did that in the first century. God does not want us to live in poverty. God requires that we take care of ourselves and our own. He does not want us to be a burden on others. We must work hard for our employer so that we can earn the money necessary for life. Sometimes we have excess when others are in need. Remember when your mother told you to eat your beans and be grateful, because there were many starving people who would be happy to have them. We find it humorous to learn every mother in the world has spoken this same thing to her children. That is the same as the one where daddy walked to school barefoot after doing his chores in the morning.**

**In the early days of the Church, it was necessary that some contributions be made for the welfare of fellow believers. It was even necessary in hard times to ask for assistance from others. In 1 Corinthians 16 and in 2 Corinthians 9, Paul discusses a particular need. There was a famine in Jerusalem. The locals did not have enough to go around to feed all the Christians there. Paul explained that they were brethren and that the Corinthians should help them as if they were the ones in hunger.**

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 (NKJV) So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. {8} And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

**Paul was discussing a particular need, but we can also read a secondary need into this passage. Giving was not necessarily applied to money. Sometimes, they could give other things that were more important.**

Mark 12:41-44 (NKJV) Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. {42} Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. {43} So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; {44} "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

**People have often asked, how much is enough?**

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NKJV) On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

**God gives us a pattern to follow. The time of this giving is to be each first day of the week. The action is to “lay by in store.” This means to set aside or contribute. The amount is dependent upon your prosperity. This does not mean after you have taken care of your needs and wants, then see if there is anything left for God.**

Malachi 3:8 (NKJV) "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.

Malachi 3:10 (NKJV) Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.

**Is tithing required today? No! The process of tithing is to give ten percent of you possessions to the Lord. Can we really do that? Simple mathematics will show that if we do, we will soon be in poverty. As we purpose in our hearts. Sometimes a person will race through their pockets when the collection plate is being passed. This does not show a great deal of thought. We must decide beforehand and prepare for this act of worship. Each person must decide how much he or she can give. There are no rules that say you have to give a certain percentage. But how do you think God feels when we spend many dollars for our own pleasure but can only find a few dollars to do His work.**

**What is the purpose of the contribution? In the two Corinthian letters, the money was for benevolent purposes. We find authority in the scriptures to apply this money to accomplish God's work. Contribution money is for the preaching of the Gospel, the edifying of the saints, and benevolence (in certain cases). When we use this money for reasons other than these, we are robbing God of what belongs to Him.**

**We do not have to worry about poverty, because God will take care of us.**

Philippians 4:19 (NKJV) And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6:31-33 (NKJV) "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' {32} "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. {33} "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

**The idea of giving also applies to yourself and your talents. We may not be able to give a lot of money, but we can give of ourselves to God. We can open our hearts to those in need. We can help others who need it. Our service we perform on behalf of others is in actuality an act of worship to God. God demands our service. God teaches us through His word to help others. We are to serve each other. We have obligations and responsibilities. God did not promise a bed of roses or an easy pathway. God promised a life of servitude. We are to become slaves of God. After our labors on earth are done, we will be allowed to rest from them.**

**Go to**[**Chapter Seven**](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Bookchap07.htm)

**Return to the**[**Book Page**](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Bookpage.htm)

**Return to the**[**Home Page**](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Home.htm)

[Home](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Home.htm) / [Bible studies](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Bible%20study%20page.htm) / [Bible Survey](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/BibleSurvey.htm) / [Special Studies](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Specialstudiespage.htm) / [General Articles](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/GenArticlepage.htm) / [Non-Bible Articles](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/nonbiblearticlesindex.htm) / [Sermons](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Sermonspage.htm) /[Sermon Outlines](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Sermonoutlines.htm) / [Links](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Linkspage.htm) / [Questions and Answers](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/QAindex.htm) / [What Saith The Scriptures](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/WSindex.htm) /[Daily Devotional](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/BCindex.htm)/ [Correspondence Courses](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Corrcourses.htm)/ [What is the Church of Christ](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Whatischurch.htm) / [Book: Christian Growth](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Bookpage.htm) / [Website Policy](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/Policy.htm) / [E-mail](mailto:cwsermons@aol.com) / [About Me](http://www.simplebiblestudies.com/myhomepage.htm) /